

GARY ZITTERICH

Gary Zitterich first climbed in a sprint car at the age of 29 in 1981, and he tore up area tracks for the next 30 years. Although he hasn't raced since 2011, he's got three sprint cars ready to go in his Sioux Falls garage and he's never officially retired. He's a two-time 360 sprint car champion at Huset's Speedway, winning in 1991 and '92. In '91, he was the first driver at Huset's to win both heat races and both features in the same night in two different sprint car classes. He also won a 410 sprint car feature that year with a 360 motor – the first to do so at Huset's. "A lot of people don't realize all you give up to go racing," he said. "You give up time with the family. You give up time with the kids. There's never a family vacation. The kids grow up in the garage and the racetrack." In 1984, Zitterich started to make a mark in sprint cars when he partnered with Larry Aplan and Taner Ross. He got his first sprint car win that season, a trophy dash when the World of Outlaws visited Knoxville Raceway in Iowa. In his first career win, Zitterich shared the podium with legends Sammy Swindell and Steve Kinser. Zitterich got his first feature victory the following year at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds in Sioux Falls. "We had a lot of pride in our cars and every penny we had went into those racecars," he said. "When someone thinks enough of you to put you on this pedestal and put you in the Hall of Fame, it's pretty cool." The Estherville, Iowa, native began his love of sprint racing as a youngster when he and his brothers would stand on their father's car and peak over the fence to catch the races. "We grew up on the tough end of town and didn't have a lot of money," he said. "We'd only see the roofs of the cars and a bunch of flying dirt, but at least we were at the races." Throughout his career, Zitterich has been visible in the community. He's taken his car to schools and hospitals, and always had a bag of candy to give the young fans after the races at Huset's. He would later invite other drivers to go into the stands during intermission to pass out candy. Zitterich was twice named the Huset's Speedway Most Popular Driver. "I was 100 percent surprised when I got in," he said. "I'll admit I had tears in my eyes. I never thought I'd see it happen